CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CHARACTER.

1. The Exercise of Attention in the Development of Christian Character — Phil. 4:8

2. The Christian Soldier (Xn Armor). — Ephes. 6:13-18.

3. The Prophetic Element in Xn Life and Activity. — Deut. 34:10. Nu. 11:29.

4.

4. With Jesus. — Acts. 4:13.

5. The Influence of Christians. — Dan. 12:3

6. Our Life in Christ. — Col. 3:3-4.

7. The First Christians. — Acts 11:26.

8. Christian Endurance — Matt. 10:22

9. The Training of Conscience. — Acts 24:16.

10. The Xn Standard of Right Living. — John 14:15.

11. Decision and Xn Character — 1 Cor. 16:13

The Example of attention
In the Development of Christian
Phil 4 8

TEXT:- Phil.4:8 Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things.

THEME:- The Exercise of Attention in the Development of Christian Character.

INTRO:-The Influence of environment upon Living Things

Every living organism, be it the single-celled,structureless, microscopic amoeba or the the highest developed,complex-structured vertebrate, is dependent upon its environment for its sustenance and habitat.. The great variety and unequal distribution of substances, climate, and vegetation upon the surface of the earth compel all forms of organic life to adapt themselves to their surroundings, even to the changing of their structures.when necessary. The method of adaptation is that of natural selection. God has endowed every living thing with the faculty of choosing from its surroundings such ~~sustenance~~ material as it needs for its own preservation and for the preservation of its own species. A fish is adapted to live in the water and has the power to take from the water the oxygen and food it needs for ~~sustenance~~ growth. The grain of wheat appropreates from soil and sun and rain the necessities for its own growth. The birds of the air and the animals upon the land, likewise, adapt themselves to their environment and select from their surroundings that which they need for self-preservation. The animal "man" is also dependent upon his environment for food and shelter. But there is this difference. Whereas non-selfconscious organic life adapts itself so as to fit into its surroundings, the self-conscious being modifies its environment to accomplish the ends of its own choesing. In order to secure food, clothing, and shelter man transforms the forest into farm and orchard, reclaims desert areas and swamp lands, and extracts from the earth her minerals.and from the sea her living creatures. To man is thus given the power to create for himself a world after his own fashion. Given the power to plan for himself and to carry out his plan according to his own free will,man has been made to share with God in the working out of his own destiny. Hence there grew up in the mind of man a ~~system~~ of ideals which ever represented to him the goal towards which he must strive. Along with the changing of his environment man has ever been changing his ideals also. And most naturally, for the accomplishment of one thing serves but to suggest a better thing or the thing, made better. if that be worth while. The constant exercise of these higher powers has resulted in the setting up of a system of values--artistic, scientific, ethical, spiritual--which control all the interests of conscious life and which shape the ends towards which all men are striving. The artist in his endeavor to spread upon the canvass his ideal picture is guided and controlled by the standards of his art. The scientist in his search after the perfect truth concerning the object of his investigation is governed by the standards of his particular sciehce. And so on with all human workers. The values or standards in question as mere ideal conceptions are vague and useless until we actualize and ~~realize~~ them. This can be accomplished only as we think about them, attend to them, and work at them, unceasingly and almightily until we make them our abiding place and theyenable us to live higher and more effectively.

2.The Exercise of Attention.

I.Man's Spiritual Environment.

Man is a spiritual being and as such has a spiritual environment. In the unrecorded ages of the past when he first began to change his surroundings to suit his own immediate ends and long before he had systematized his values man experienced within his soul a striving after the Infinite! Religion was born with self-consciousness. Animism, totemism, tabooism, fetischism, and ancestral worship of primative man and the worship of Nature as shown in the various mythologies together give a mass of evidence which testifies most strongly concerning the "religiousness"of man. A scientific study of all the religions of the world both ancient and modern should convince any honest doubter that man has a spiritual environment and that that spiritual environment is the Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable Spirit of the Universe whom we Christians designate as God.

II.The Christian's Spiritual Values.

The conception of God as held by the Christian world represents the Infinite Being more truly and completely than that of any other, and for two reasons. In the first place the Christian ideal of God is higher, more elevating, and more inspiring one that can be found anywhere. And in the second place, tho it has never been perfectly realized except in the life of Christ, the Christian Ideal of God has elevated man to his yet highest attainment of civilization, spiritually, morally, socially, and materially.

He who takes for his own the Christian idea of God is duty bound to do two things. He must strive to transform the vague, indefinite ideal of the Infinite Being into a definite and local reality. His own life must be made to harmonize with the Life of God. He must find his own perfect self in Him who is his God and Father. The Christian is also duty-bound to regard all fellow-beings as brethren and bring them to a like knowledge of their Creator. In striving to live up to his duty he has at his command certain spiritual values by which he may know that his efforts are being directed rightly. Whereas it is true that the Bible is the Christian's rule of faith and practice, it were more definite to say that Jesus Christ is that rule to him because Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the perfect representation of God in Humanity, the Christian ideal of God made real--transformed into flesh and blood. The Master Himself is the standard of measurement of all His disciples. In considering our text as containing standards of measurement this fact must be borne in mind.

1."Whatsoever things are true",is our first value according to the text. This means everything that Jesus Christ says is true or represents as true. "I am the Truth", said Jesus. What did He mean by His statement? Could He have meant anything else than that He in His own Life and Character truely represented the Life and Character of His Father in heaven? "I and my Father are one" is another way in which Jesus said the same thing. To abide in Christ is to set forth a true likeness of Him in our own life and character.even as Christ's abiding in the Father is manifested by His own Godlikeness. All things, then, everything, anything that is consistent with the nature and character of God is true. All such

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things we are to think upon and lay hold of in order to make our lives correspond more truly to the Life of Him who is perpectly true.

2."whatsoever things are honorable"...according to Jesus Christ! All things worthy of respect and reverence. Everything which Jesus Christ honored and revered. True gentlemanliness and womanliness is not to be determined by outward conformity to society's rules of etiquette but by inward conformity to the Life of God to whom alone belongs all honor and glory.

3."whatsoever things are just". The justice that is to govern men in their relations with one another is that which truly represents God's justice to man. It is justice that is merciful, giving to the unjust an opportunity to become just. All things in accordance with God's righteousness. Everything which Jesus Christ represents to be right.

4."whatsoever things are pure". Not what modern society says is pure, nor what our own likes and dislikes indicate to us as being pure, but the clear, clean, genuine, unadulterated, chaste, things which come from the mind and heart of one who is true to God and honors his Father in heaven. We must here also go to the Master and learn of Him.

5."whatsoever things are lovely." By lovely is not meant that which happens to strike our fancy or by that which has but an outward appearance of being beautiful. The things that are lovely are they that are like the love of God. The things that are pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God. The greek word here translated "lovely" is "prosphilos," meaning like-friend, friendly, amicable, grateful. All things which tend to make us more friendly one to another, even as God loves us!

6."whatsoever things are of good report"...to Jesus Christ! We are greatly concerned with what others think of us. Their estimation of us is of the greatest moment. Many think more of their reputation than they do of their God. The Greek word here means 'to speak well of'. The things which will make us speak well of one another are here meant. And what are all such things but they which God approves? If we do the things that please God our reputations will take care of themselves.

III.The Christian's Attention to Spiritual Things.

The closing words of the text are,"think on these things". This is an emphatic command. We are not merely to think about them for a few minutes and then dismiss them from our minds altogether. But we are to pay attention to them, that is, we are to tend to them. And for what purpose? That we may bring the things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report out of their indefinite everywhereness and make them to dwell within ourselves, giving to them our own lives for a dwelling-place. We are to seek them and to take a hold of them and to incarnate them into our very lives and charaters until we do truly embody them and truly represent them to others.

"In the first place we are to seek these things. We are to look for them everywhere, in all the books and papers we read, in the Bible, in fellow Christians, and in everyone with whom we meet. All nature about us, human and otherwise, is full of things that are true and pure. Let us keep our eyes open to find them. Let us be on the watch for them lest any should escape our notice.

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4.The Exercise of Attention.

Secondly,we are to select these things and set them apart from all other things, for they are for the upbuilding of our own spiritual selves. Every organism selects from its environment that which it needs for its nutrition and preservation. And so the Christian must select from his surroundings the things he needs in the building up of his spiritual life in Christ.

Thirdly, we are to assimilate these things, making them into the very substance of our beings, for if we build our characters out of su such substance, we shall indeed truly represent Him in whom we live and move and have our being. "Ye therefore shall be perfect even as your Heavenly Father is perfect.",

The Apostle Paul wrote,"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling". This is exactly what is meant by exercising our attention upon the things that make for righteousness. It is not that we do it alone but that we share with God in His making us to grow into His perfect likeness. How interested, then, we should be! And how attentive ought we to be to these spiritual things! God never spoke to man except thru man's own consciousness and no man has ever become Godlike except as he chose for his own godlike things and made them to become his own life and character. God saves only those who are willing to be saved. And they who are willing that God should save them are willing not in any passive sense but in the active sense that they are willing with all their might, that they are earnestly seeking and selecting and and making to become their very own God Himself, and His Righteousness and Love and mercy and goodness.

God's name is above every name. And for this very reason
He wants every name to stand for Him.